

The REFORMED JOURNAL

VOLUME III — No. 2

A periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion

FEBRUARY, 1953

Some Current Trends In Our Mission to America

READERS of *The Reformed Journal* may be interested in a factual report regarding some significant trends in evangelism as it is carried on within the Christian Reformed denomination. Regardless of how one views these trends they must be reckoned with. Perhaps some or all of them will eventually become decisive in overall home missions policy.

I. The Expanding Role of the Local Church in Denominational Evangelism

There is considerable talk nowadays about decentralizing home missions. What is usually meant is not that denominational home missions should be discontinued, but only that congregation and classis should have a more direct participation in the work.

There is much to recommend such a development. For one thing, it has become apparent to many that financially the expansion of home missions depends largely on securing *calling churches* which are also *supporting churches*. To such observers it is quite unrealistic to expect expansion by an increase in denominational quota. In foreign missions this was recognized long ago, and today quotas are supplemented by about \$75,000 per year from *calling and supporting churches*. The Synod of 1952 was looking in this direction when it decided "to authorize the procurement of supporting churches for . . . evangelism and church extension."

There is another important aspect to the role of the local church in denominational evangelism, a less tangible one. It has to do with the concentration of

spiritual resources in the interest of a specific field. For instance, the Second Christian Reformed Church of Paterson not only pays the salary of Missionary Eugene Callender in Harlem, but also shows great devotion and loyal cooperation in prayer, concern, and work. The same kind of relationship exists between the Urbana-Champaign field and Bethany South Holland Church. In one of his reports Missionary Fred Klooster recently spoke gratefully of "the close ties we enjoy with the supporting and calling congregation." There is much more vitality in such a relationship than in one where a distant and impersonal board is the only ecclesiastical body directly concerned, while some congregation obligingly but quite arbitrarily serves in the mere technical capacity of calling church.

There is another straw in the wind. At present the Franklin Street Church in Grand Rapids has loaned its lay-ex-

horter, Mr. Miner Tanis, to serve at Albuquerque, New Mexico for three months. Likewise, the four Roseland Churches in Chicago are loaning their lay worker, Mr. Walter Aardsma, for three months' work in the Columbus, Ohio field. These are interesting examples of a broadening of the horizons of local churches in terms of denominational evangelism.

II. The Enlarging Place of the Local Church in Community Evangelism

More and more it is being realized among us that to have, side by side in the community, *churches which are not missions and missions which are not churches* is a crippling dualism. Increasingly efforts are being made to resolve this dualism either by developing the mission into a church or by developing the church into a mission, depending on local circumstances. It is the latter trend with which we are here particularly concerned.

IN THIS ISSUE

Some Current Trends in our Mission to America	Harold Dekker	1
On Interpreting the Bible	Harry R. Boer	3
On Reading Pagan Writers	Henry Stob	6
Missions and the Creeds —		
III — The Canons of Dordt	Harry R. Boer	9
Junior Colleges Reconsidered	Henry Zylstra	11
The Voice of the Waters	Lewis Smedes	15
Letters to the Journal		16

"Parish evangelism" it has been called. Such a program has been under way for some time already in the Creston Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. Recently the four Roseland Churches redirected the work of their lay missionaries, Mr. Walter Aardsma and Miss Gertrude Bos, from the neighborhood mission as center to the four congregations as center. Sunday services at the mission have been discontinued, and the workers are charged with contacting the homes in the community with a view to introducing new faces into the worship services, the Sunday School, the society meetings and the other activities of the Churches. It is interesting to note that these lay workers in their canvassing also call at homes of Christian Reformed people to urge them to take an active part in drawing their neighbors to our services.

For a number of years the Christian Reformed Church at Rochester, New York conducted a mission Sunday School at the local Christian School. Recently it has become clear that in order to properly develop its neighborhood evangelism a choice had to be made between erecting a chapel or developing the congregation itself as a mission. The latter alternative has now prevailed. After a thorough study of the entire question by the Local Mission Committee (a committee of the consistory, not of a mission society) a concrete course of action has been drawn up. Some of the points in this plan are: to maintain the separate Sunday School for children through the eighth grade and thereupon to take them into the regular Sunday School, to bring children from the neighborhood of the church into the regular Sunday School, to encourage the parents of both sets of children to attend the services and to organize a special Bible Class for them, and to appoint a full-time lay worker to head a broad evangelistic program with the church itself as the center. In giving reasons for this plan the Committee had such things as these to say:

(1) "A large majority of the twenty ministers and missionaries consulted favor this plan."

(2) "The full-orbed life of the Church is what mission subjects need."

(3) "The people we work with are not interested in a mission station — they want a church."

(4) "The argument that we are so advanced spiritually, that mission subjects cannot understand our sermons, is greatly over-emphasized according to some ministers. They argue that a person with average intelligence and a high school education should have no difficulty in getting the main thrust of our sermons. If there are questions, it is the purpose of the special Bible Class to discuss such questions and explain the sermons more fully."

Other examples of churches which are themselves becoming real neighborhood missions would not be hard to find. Their number is steadily increasing.

III. The Improving Status of the Lay Worker

It is to the lasting credit of lay evangelists — both paid and volunteer workers — that when for many years there was general indifference to neighborhood evangelism on the part of consistories and the largest part of our membership, they still persevered in a discouraging and little recognized task. The real evangelism we have had, at least until recent years, has been due mostly to the efforts of these dauntless few. Happily a great change is taking place. No longer is the "mission worker" tolerated or ignored as was so often the case. No longer is evangelism confined to the doorstep, the storefront, the county jail and the home for the poor. The lay evangelist is increasingly being given his due place in the life of the Church, both denominationally and congregationally.

This fact is evident from some of the instances cited above. At Albuquerque and Columbus lay exhorters are now performing valuable service, for the first time, as missionaries in charge of denominational fields. Of course, as they themselves recognize, they are preparing the way for an ordained missionary soon to follow. The Roseland and Creston Grand Rapids examples show how laymen can function in the direct outreach of the local church. There is also the case of Sioux City where, supported by Classis Orange City, one of our women lay workers is assisting the Reverend Jack Zandstra, a denominational missionary.

In a previous article the present writer said: "If we are to move effectively into our nation with the Reformed

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Published each month by the
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Subscription price: \$2.00 per year

Entered as Second Class Matter at the Post-office at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Address all subscriptions and communications to:

THE REFORMED JOURNAL

255 Jefferson Avenue, S. E.

Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

witness and fellowship we will have to use sizeable teams of workers, including both the ordained and the unordained . . . (in a) comprehensive, well coordinated effort. Let's have comradeship not competition, teamwork not segregation, integration not disjunction." This appears more likely now than it did even a year ago.

IV. Changing Attitudes on Responsibility for Buildings

Traditionally in our evangelism, responsibility for physical properties has been assumed almost entirely by the sponsoring ecclesiastical body — whether consistory, classis or synod. There has usually been neither necessity nor inclination on the part of those gathered in to take the initiative in providing a place of worship. In some cases the chapel or church has been built even before starting regular services, and in other cases after a small nucleus had been formed.

This general policy is now being questioned on two levels, on the level of practice and on the level of principle. On the level of practice it is found that while the opportunities for opening new fields are numerous, comparatively few can be occupied if each one requires an expenditure of from

twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars for building. Our financial resources for such capital outlay are strictly limited, and consequently many promising fields are left lying fallow. In denominational home missions, for instance, new work has been impressively launched in recent years in Tucson, Arizona; Lakewood City, California; and more recently in Wannamassa, New Jersey — in each case by erection of a place of worship at denominational expense. But how many such projects can we undertake? One or two per year? Or maybe even three by an increase in quota? Then how long will it take to exploit Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City, Columbus, Philadelphia and Madison — where services are already being held — and hereafter Boston, Syracuse, Buffalo, Memphis, and many other cities where God beckons us to move in? Thoughtful home mission leaders are giving attention to this pressing problem.

An even more searching question arises, however, out of consideration of principle. In foreign missions this issue has become familiar to the Church as one which revolves around the idea that missions should be *indigenous*, that is, that missions should yield a body of believers who are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. This view holds that, although there are always exceptional circumstances, basically the responsibility of the sending church is limited to the full maintenance of the missionary. What are the implications of this

principle for home missions? What does it mean for evangelism in America? These questions have not yet been answered, either by synodical study and decision or even by the definitive study of an individual. Thoughtful people in home missions, however, are not unaware of them.

Even if we had large financial reserves for erecting church buildings it would not do to shrug off the question of principle. It must be faced on its own merits. It does not show proper concern for the Biblical doctrine of missions to say, as one missionary did recently, "We can talk about indigenous missions all we want, but this small nucleus is unable to provide a place of worship suitable to the present needs." Let's go to the New Testament before we define "inability" and "present needs."

Happily, many of the groups who are now looking forward to the establishment of a Christian Reformed Church in their communities are robust daughters who do not necessarily expect to be financially spoon-fed by the denomination. In Urbana-Champaign the group pays its own way in renting an Adventist Church and talks about the day when it may be able to buy that church as its very own. A somewhat similar arrangement exists in Salt Lake City. In Columbus, by dint of much physical sweat and a small financial assist from three interested consistories, a two-room meeting place has been renovated and leased for two years full-time use at a total rental of only \$200.

The Albuquerque and Philadelphia groups have started their Building Funds, even before the assignment of a regular home missionary. And in Oklahoma City a group of four families, only one of which is formerly Christian Reformed, have started regular Sunday evening meetings and have rented part of a store for their exclusive use at \$25.00 per month, with intentions to at once build pews and a pulpit — all this without regular leadership.

It goes without saying that all of these fields will require heavy denominational subsidy, but they can take basic responsibility themselves. It is probably not yet a real trend, but there are some indications that in years to come home mission dollars will be spent somewhat more for missionaries' salaries and somewhat less for wood and brick.

* * *

THERE is a ferment of ideas today in regard to the Church's evangelism. The role of the local congregation in both denominational and community evangelism, the place of the lay worker, the policy in respect to buildings — these are just a few of the focal points of thought and discussion. There is also the possible realignment of denominational mission agencies, on the agenda of the 1953 Synod, which involves home missions in a large way. Radio evangelism still awaits synodical delineation and correlation. Certainly these are interesting times in our mission to America.

On Interpreting the Bible

By HARRY R. BOER

THE profound comfort of the Christian is that his God is a personal God. He is designated in the Scriptures as *our Father*. With this tender appellation the prayer which our Lord himself taught us begins. As Father he makes us his children, hears our prayers, provides in our needs, chastises us when wayward, and when he leads us through the vale of sorrows he treasures our tears and puts them all in his bottle.

But this Father is the Father who is *in Heaven*. He is the great God who has made the heavens and the earth, who dwells in light unapproachable, before whom kings and judges tremble.

He is God and there is none like him, for he declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. Who shall not fear this great King of the nations?

When in the Church or on the mission field we bring our witness to this Father as he has made himself known in Christ we stand before a profound two-fold danger. It is the danger of forgetting, on the one hand, that the Father whom we proclaim is the Father *in Heaven* and, on the other hand, that the Father in heaven is indeed the *Father*. When we witness to either at the expense of the other we witness to neither. For the heavenly Father and

the Father in Heaven are one, and there is none other.

This danger is not imaginary, it is real. I have heard men so pray, hands in pocket, addressing God as "you," that one would think they were talking to their neighbor. And I have read such presentations of the unchangeable God that I wondered how a God so encased in formula and definition could possibly have the heart of a Father. Neither of these is the God of the Scriptures. The God of the Scriptures is the majestic, unchangeable God who is indeed moved by our infirmity and need. Therefore the Bible can say that God is *Love*.

The Temptation of Orthodoxy

THE line of Orthodoxy that comes to us from the past has always been more in danger of losing sight of

On Interpreting the Bible — Continued

the emotional aspects of God's self-revelation than of his majesty and unchangeableness. The reason for this probably is that Orthodoxy is theological in character, the nature of theology is to systematize, and the unchangeable lends itself more to systematization than the emotional. Now theology is not only inevitable in the life of the Church, it is highly desirable and necessary. It defends the faith against error, sets forth the truths of Scripture in their inter-relationships, unifies and clarifies the mind of the Church. But as it is the nature of theology to systematize, so it is the temptation of all systematic effort to encompass its results in a closed system. This temptation must be resisted because everywhere in the Bible we meet *mystery*. The ancient Church struggled long and painfully with various efforts to enclose in a comprehensible formula the relationship between the human and the divine natures in Christ. It rejected them all. It rejected the solution of Apollinaris, and of Nestorius, and of Eutychus. At the famous council of Chalcedon it simply affirmed as the teaching of Scripture and the faith of the Church that the two natures in Christ are unmixed, unchanged, undivided, and unseparated. In this way the Church honored both the data and the boundaries of Scripture and fully accepted the mystery of the relationship.

Paul understood this. When men tried to make him draw conclusions from the doctrines he set forth that were not warranted by the revelation that had been given him, he met them fiercely, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" And when he contemplated the marvelous history of redemption he found it too wonderful to comprehend and resorted to doxology, "O the depth, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Therefore Bavinck says somewhere that the heart of dogmatics is mystery.

I should like to discuss a particular area of biblical teaching in the understanding of which the danger I referred to comes to very prominent expression. I have in mind the problem of understanding those passages in the Bible that speak of God's wrath, grief, disappointment, longsuffering and, espe-

cially, repentance, in connection with the clear scriptural teaching of God's unchangeableness or, as it is more technically called, his immutability. In short, how do we understand that God is both the heavenly *Father*, with all the affective qualities implied in that word, and the Father who is in *Heaven* having the majesty and unchangeableness of the eternal divine being? In order to do this fruitfully it will first be necessary to become acquainted with two terms which we shall have to use in discussing the problem.

The Analogy of Faith

A minister's workshop has a great many tools. Some of them have names we all readily recognize — commentaries, the Greek New Testament, works on dogmatics, technical terms like canonicity, exegesis, etc. In this discussion I want to use two tools that not only are much less known, but that are often not properly handled by men who use them. They are the *analogy of faith* and *anthropomorphism*. I hope these words won't frighten the reader away because they are really not hard to understand, and when one does understand them his appreciation for much that is in the Bible will correspondingly increase. I shall try to outline their meaning in this article and in a following article bring both to bear on the problem of understanding God's grief, repentance, and the like, in the light of his unchangeableness.

There is a tendency in orthodox circles, which can at times become a very bad reality, to view the Christian faith in terms of hard and fast definitions and to call into question any exposition of Scripture that does not immediately and obviously square with these definitions. The convenient instrument whereby this is done is a misunderstanding and therefore misapplied conception of the analogy of faith.

What is meant by the analogy of faith?

Because the Bible is in its essential teaching about the way of salvation clear and plain (the perspicuity of Scripture) it has the faculty of being able to interpret itself. The clear passages serve to illumine the more obscure and the main teachings of the Bible as a whole serve to explain its several parts. The Reformers who gave

prominence to the analogy of faith did not, as is sometimes thought, just go to the Bible without any background in the history of theology and simply from it alone develop their theology. They stood in the tradition of the Church Fathers and fully accepted the deliverances of the great ecumenical councils. They were Biblical theologians but they cannot possibly be called biblicalists. They accepted the clear teaching of the Bible as laid down in the creeds of the Church and they interpreted the Bible in the light of this deposit of faith. This rule for the interpretation of the Bible, namely the teachings of the Scriptures as laid down in creeds and confession, is called the analogy of faith. (See especially Bavinck, *General Dogm.*, Vol. I, pp. 510 ff.).

We believe that the Bible is a unit because God is its ultimate Author. This makes the analogy of faith possible and necessary in the interpretation of the Scriptures, excluding as it does the contradictory in the system of Christian truth. But the analogy of faith must be handled very carefully and, I would especially say, *conscientiously*. In the problem presented by the relationship between the immutability of God and what we may call the affective aspect of God's being (love, wrath, indignation, repentance) we must particularly exercise care. It will not do to say that since the Bible clearly teaches the unchangeableness of God the references to his affections are merely ways of speaking and therefore have no real meaning. This is simply a pseudo-theological way of nullifying large and significant portions of Scripture. The analogy of faith is no cure-all for the difficulties involved in interpreting the Bible. On the contrary it burdens us with the very severe responsibility of studying the Scriptures closely to find in the one divine Word the one divine meaning.

An Example

IN John 16:26, 27 we read, "At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me and believed that I came out from God," John 16:26, in the light of, "I am Christ that died, yea, rather, that am risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Romans 8:34, and "Wherefore he is able also to save

them to the uttermost that come to God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,*" Heb. 7:25, and "If any man sin, *we have an advocate with the Father,* Jesus Christ the righteous," 1 John 2:1. On basis of these and other scriptural data the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Days 12 and 18) and the Belgic Confession (Article 26) teach that Christ is our intercessor and Advocate with the Father. But how then must we understand, "and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you"?

An explanation that makes the analogy of faith a substitute for exegesis may decide that this passage is something that will just have to be "interpreted" in the line of the other passages and of the creeds. Responsible exegesis, on the other hand, recognizes that when God speaks once he speaks as seriously as when he speaks twenty times. Therefore it tries to understand what is meant here. F. W. Grosheide, the well known Dutch New Testament scholar, exegetes the passage as follows: The intercession of Christ is necessary only because so much remains wanting in the prayers of his disciples. He implies that although the work of Christ will always remain the basis for communion with the Father the intercession of Christ will cease when we shall have attained the state of perfection. Even so, there is now a directness of access to the Father which did not exist before the work of Christ on the cross, in the resurrection, and in his ascension. Communion with the Father is characterized by an intimacy and immediacy that is a very particular fruit of the New Testament dispensation.

It is evident that the passage, so understood, gives insights into the difference between the old and the new dispensations, the work of Christ, and the nature of prayer which are in a high degree rewarding. In fact, here is a case in which an apparently obscure passage in the Bible not only retains its own character and message, but also serves to shed further light on the passages that already were plain. And this leads me to suggest the important general principle that the more obscure passages in the Bible deserve close attention not only for their own sake, but also for further elaborating or more closely understanding the content of the faith already set forth. The value of this principle we shall have occasion to see more clearly when we consider the relationship between God's immu-

tability and his repentance. In any case, the exegesis briefly presented above shows that it will not do to interpret the Bible simply by counting up passages and giving the vote to the longer list. All are God's Word and all must be taken seriously and explored to the limits of the possible. It will be seldom indeed that such exploration is not rewarded.

Anthropomorphism

THE second term we want to try to understand is the word anthropomorphism. The meaning of this rather unusual word is not difficult to grasp and its proper understanding, too, will enrich our reading of the Bible. It is derived from two Greek words, *anthropos* and *morphe*. The first means man, the second, form. It means, therefore, in human form, after a human fashion. In this sense it conveys a rather profound meaning when applied to the biblical conception of God. It conveys the thought, the very biblical thought, that the Bible speaks to us about God in terms of ourselves, and of our knowledge and of our experience. The reason for this roots in the fact that we are created in God's image. Having first made us to be reflectors of himself God uses this reflection to illuminate and reveal himself to us.

We do not and we cannot know God as he is in himself. God is God and we are men. He is the infinite One and we are his finite creatures. Only the three Persons of the blessed Trinity fully know each other and the nature of the divine being. When God wishes to reveal himself to us, therefore, he accommodates himself to our limitations and speaks to us in terms of the world and of men whom he has created.

The Bible is literally full of illustrations of this type of revelation. It speaks of God's face, eyes, ears, mouth, lips, arm, right hand, heart, bowels. He is described as experiencing joy, pain, sorrow, fear, love, mercy, jealousy, hatred, wrath, repentance. Typical human actions are attributed to him as examining, knowing, thinking, remembering, speaking, calling, commanding, rebuking, answering, witnessing, working, resting. He is represented as a bridegroom, a judge, lawgiver, a warrior, an architect, a shepherd, a healer. Even nature is called upon to reveal him for God is compared to a lion, a lamb, a hen, a sun, the sun, the morning star, a light, a fire, a spring, a rock, a tower, a shadow.

All that the Bible says about God is anthropomorphic. It cannot speak of Him in any other way. Even when the Bible speaks about God's immutability, omniscience, omnipresence, wisdom, goodness and omnipotence, it applies or denies to God certain qualities that are like human qualities. In this way God uses the image of himself after which he has created us to make himself known to us. We can therefore never comprehend him fully as he comprehends himself. God is the infinite One, dwelling in light unapproachable and there is no searching of his understanding.

This is by no means to say that we cannot know God or that the revelation he has given of himself is not true. It is indeed true, wholly true, but it does not exhaust the truth about God. This the creature can never do. Nevertheless, the figurative language that the Bible uses to make God known to us faithfully reveals him and it does so because nature and man reflect the divine being for whose revelation and glory the world and the men in it were created. A fire, a bridegroom, an eye, a father, can be used to describe God because he has created the fire, the bridegroom, the eye, the father to reveal some aspect of himself.

My purpose in adducing these various illustrations is to affirm that biblical anthropomorphism *reveals* God; that, therefore, when the Bible speaks about God's wrath, longsuffering, repentance, and the like, it is saying something about God that is *true* and that must be taken *seriously*. When we do so we shall find ourselves confronted with the problem of trying scripturally to understand how the one God can reveal himself to be both immutable and possessed of affective, that is, truly fatherly qualities. The creeds teach the immutability of God because the Bible teaches it. It is the cornerstone of all theology and the bedrock of our Christian religion. But this does not mean that passages speaking about God's disappointment, grief, and repentance must be interpreted out of existence. If we submit to such a use of Scripture we may keep a distant deity in the distant heavens, or a deity like the high gods of primitive religion, or the "Wholly Other" of the Barthians, but we will be in danger of losing the God and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and with him the beauty and the trust and the devotion and the communion implicit in the Father-child relationship.

Reading the Pagan Writers

By HENRY STOE

I commented last month on a counsellor's advice to a student. The counsellor had advised the student not to take too much philosophy. I questioned the soundness of the advice. The advice, I declared, was based on a misunderstanding. The counsellor misconceived philosophy. Had he really understood its nature he could not have spoken as he did. The man who understands philosophy doesn't warn against it; he recommends it. He doesn't counsel dabbling in it; he counsels immersion in it. He knows that a student cannot take too much philosophy. He knows that philosophy does not admit of excess.

The man who understands philosophy also knows, I added, that philosophy is never neutral. It never starts from scratch. It always starts from certain unquestioned assumptions. It always articulates a basic commitment. This means many things. Among the things it means is that Christianity and Philosophy are perfectly compatible. A student need not stop being Christian when he starts being philosophical. He can be both at once. He has only to take care that when he philosophizes his assumptions remain Christian. When he does take this precaution he may pursue his inquiries to the very limit of his capacities. All this being so, there was, I judged, no good reason for the counsellor advising the student not to take too much philosophy.

Now it is possible that I misunderstood the counsellor. Perhaps he was concerned to make a point quite other than the one I hit upon. It is quite possible that, were he able now to talk, he would say to me:

ALL that you say is true, and I was not concerned to challenge it. I know that all philosophy is religiously oriented. I know that a Christian philosophy is possible and necessary. I know that a Christian student should get as much Christian philosophy into him as he possibly can. But I also know that most philosophy is anti-Christian. Philosophy grew up in the first instance among those who were strangers to the oracles of God. Its development has been almost exclusively in the hands of those who wished to exercise their reason either in inde-

pendence of special revelation or else in conscious opposition to it. It is only lately, I am told, that a serious and successful attempt has been made to construct a philosophy on Christian suppositions. It is evident, therefore, that only a very small part of philosophical literature is Christian, and that the vast bulk of it is in opposition to the Christ.

"It was this that I had in mind when I counselled the student. I knew that if he took a lot of philosophy he would be tempted to read widely in anti-Christian books. I also knew that in colleges professing to be Christian a student is often invited, sometimes even urged, to read unbelieving literature. This troubled me, and in counselling the student I gave expression to my concern. I voiced the grave doubts I entertain about the wisdom of sending Christian students to pagan authors for light. The simple fact is, I don't believe a Christian student can profit much from reading in secular philosophy. Such reading can do him incalculable harm — and what good can it do?

"I hold, you see, that the philosophy of non-Christian thinkers is falsified by their idolatrous commitment and by their rejection of the living God. I hold that the Truth is not in them. I do not regard them as safe guides to Wisdom and Happiness. I believe that the origin and purpose and meaning of all created things cannot be learned from them, for they are in the dark concerning these. They have substituted lies and vain imaginings for the truth.

"I consider it best, therefore, that a Christian student have the minimum of traffic with them. That is why I counselled the student as I did. Don't take too much philosophy, I said. I meant thereby: Don't read too much in pagan and modernist authors. They cast hardly any light at all upon the philosophical problems which as a Christian student you confront, and they are apt to lead you seriously astray."

HAD the counsellor been asked to justify his counsel he might have spoken in some such way as this. And had he spoken in this way he would have placed himself in a new and better light, for there is truth in what he

says. But the full bearing of that truth is, in my judgment, not articulated. The counsellor discloses important negative implications of the truth he apprehends, but he neglects almost entirely to exhibit its positive features. He is silent about the benefits to be derived from conscientious engagement with the entire body of philosophical literature, non-Christian as well as Christian. He seems either to deny that anything can be learned from unbelievers or to deny that what can be learned is worth the risk. If these denials are mere seeming, there is no quarrel. If they are real, and seriously intended, they wrench the actual situation quite out of focus, as I shall attempt to indicate.

Before I make the attempt, however, I wish to acknowledge the truth that lies in the counsellor's remarks. There is a certain force in his position and this deserves due recognition.

LET it be observed, then, that the counsellor's advice and warning is perfectly in order when addressed to a boy who, still unformed, adopts as his intellectual companions pagan and unbelieving authors with whom he seeks or finds an inner spiritual accord.

I don't know that it has ever happened, but it is possible for a philosophy student, while browsing in the library, to come upon Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, to read it, and to fall in love with it. It is possible, too, that under the spell of this experience he will steep himself in *Man a Machine* by De La Mettrie, and go on from there to count Voltaire, Ingersoll, Bertrand Russell and others of their kind.

When a boy does this he needs a resting. He needs our counsellor. He needs a man who will say to him: Don't take too much of this philosophy. Don't read too much in these mistaken authors. Stop feeding on them. Change your lean and enervating diet and substitute for it wholesome Christian food. Quit the destructive spiritual regimes which you have so foolishly imposed upon yourself. Leave your intellectual companions and stifle your infatuation for them, for they are corrupting your mind and soul.

In the situation such counselling is not allowable only; it is mandatory. When a student such as I have described comes to the attention of a Christian teacher, that teacher, if he knows his duty, will put him under surveillance and restraint. He will instruct him, and until he regains his senses, impose on him the strictest fast of pagan meats. The teacher will, in other words, echo the counsellor's advice and, under the circumstances, enforce his point even more unqualifiedly.

* * *

CONSIDER another matter: The counsellor believes that a student's actual or contemplated study of non-Christian writings should be a matter of concern to Christian teachers. In this the counsellor is right. The Christian teacher should be much concerned about the student's reading.

This concern, however, should not, except in rare and passing instances, lead him to impose restraints and prohibitions. Pagan literature does not call for rejection; it calls for appraisal. It demands the critical, not the averted, eye. Its existence obliges the teacher not to publish bans but to publish guides.

What is important to notice is that the literature — its existence and its nature — puts the teacher under obligation. It puts him in debt to his student. This is, if he be conscientious, what causes him concern. He would remain unconcerned were it possible either to legislate the literature out of the student's life or to allow it free play upon his mind. But neither is possible. The literature can neither be simply ignored nor simply accepted. It must be judged, weighed, and sifted, and there's the rub. For judgment demands a standard, and a standard must be formulated.

Here, then, is the debt he owes. He owes the student an articulated standard, a well-defined set of basic principles. He owes him canons of interpretation, critical tests and solvents. And it is Christian tests he owes him.

Unless he is able to provide these he cannot in good conscience refer the student to the literature. He may not send him out without giving him his bearings or the means of ascertaining them. He is bound to provide direction.

This is but another way of saying that he must form in the student a Christian mind, apt to judge all things

by Christian standards, and to see all things in the perspective of the Faith. Only in the degree that the teacher is engaged in the task of forming in him a Christian mind can he contemplate with equanimity the student's engagement with non-Christian thought.

It is doubtless true that the formation of the Christian mind by education requires the utilization of all the best that has been thought and said, both by non-Christians and by Christians. But the basic principles for the formation of the Christian mind are just as surely derived from the Scriptures and from sanctified reflection on them, and it is these, as I said, that should be in the possession of one who hopes to get Christian profit from the study of non-Christian thought. Only as one carries something to pagan books can one take something of lasting value from them.

There is so much justification, at least, for the counsellor's depreciation of unbelieving literature.

* * *

THERE is one other point that requires comment: The counsellor advised against "taking" philosophy, and we have understood him now to mean philosophy that is not Christian. If we further interpret his word "taking" to mean "Adoption of basic principles,"

then obviously there is no possibility at all of a Christian "taking" non-Christian philosophy. The Christian cannot, without ceasing to be himself, adopt non-Christian principles of explanation.

It is not, then, in order to get these that the Christian studies secular philosophy. He does not want these; and he may not take these. The only basic principles he may take are Christian principles, and since these are antithetical to all others, his taking them commits him to an uncompromising rejection of the others.

So much is plain from what has already been said about the religious root of all philosophy. Never may a Christian, in thought any more than in deed, forsake the Christian foundation on which by grace he is established. This foundation is not taken from philosophy at all, much less from the pagan sort. The Christian finds it laid for him — by Christ — and on this, by God's preserving grace, and in the measure of his own faithfulness, he stands immovably.

* * *

IT is because of this that he owns and is able to claim truth wherever it is found. Concerning this I shall undertake to speak in the next issue of the Journal.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on the intolerable brightness, and to commune with Him face to face.

Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from Him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but His favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems, crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt; for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand.

The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest; who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which shortsighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen.

— from the ESSAY ON MILTON
by Thomas Babington Macaulay

Thoughts On Leaving God's House

By GEORGE STOB

WHAT would you think of somebody who asked you for something you had just given to him?

You'd probably think him quite absent-minded and unobservant. And you might think that he attaches little value to what you have given him — if he takes so little notice of it that he asks for it again.

Maybe that's what the Lord sometimes thinks of His people when they worship Him — that they're absent-minded, unobservant, and so unappreciative that they don't even recognize a treasure bestowed.

Whether that is really so or not, I will not venture to say. But I will say that in some parts of our order of worship we look that way.

* * *

IN many, perhaps most, of our churches, the service of worship ends up with a song by the congregation.

Sometimes that song is a doxology — an ascription of praise to God. There are two commonly used doxologies in our Psalter-Hymnal — No. 464, "Now Blessed Be Jehovah God," and No. 468, "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow." Another doxology, the so-called *Gloria Patri*, is most generally sung after the confession of faith in the Apostle's Creed.

It has become a rather widespread practice in our churches to conclude the evening service not with a doxology, but with a prayer — a prayer sung by the congregation. The prayers most generally sung are the Psalter-Hymnal numbers: 463 — "May the Grace of Christ our Savior," 339 — "Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise," and 338 — "Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing."

It may be considered appropriate to conclude the service of worship with a doxology. After God's people have been in God's house, enriched with His fellowship, fed by His Word, and after they have finally received from Him in the benediction the assurance of His grace — the people of God may well respond to all of that with a song of praise to the Giver of so much and so great goodness.

But when the service of worship is concluded with such prayers as I have

just mentioned, it is confusing. It is here that the congregation seems — absent-mindedly and apparently without regard for what it has just received — to be asking for the very blessing that the God of heaven has already vouchsafed in the solemn word of benediction.

HERE are three representative instances of the confused worship pattern in actual use in many of our churches.

THE FIRST. The minister raises his hands over the people, and in the benediction blesses them in God's name. The organ plays, and the people sing. Their song is a prayer:

*Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing
.....
Of Thy love some gracious token
Grant us Lord, before we go . . .*

The song finished, the people move toward the exits, and engage in conversation with friends and acquaintances as they do so. They do not wait for "some gracious token" for which they asked; and they do not seem to realize that the Lord gave of his love "some gracious token" and dismissed them with His blessing *before* they sang the song in which they asked for it.

THE SECOND. The minister pronounces the benediction over the bowed heads of the worshipping congregation:

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God, and
The communion of the Holy Spirit,
Be with you all, Amen.*

No sooner has the congregation heard this pledge of divine grace than the same congregation prays:

*May the grace of Christ our Savior,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favor,
Rest upon us from above . . .*

It is a very nice prayer, and the minister is almost moved by it to grant, in God's name, what they plead, and to raise his hands again in benediction.

But there's no occasion. The congregation is already shuffling out. They are not waiting for an assurance of the grace for which they asked. They

seem not even to be mindful of the fact that God pledged His grace, in the moment of benediction, *before* they asked for it.

THE THIRD. In speaking the benediction the minister uses the so-called Aaronitic blessing:

*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:
The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

After God has, through His servant, spoken peace to His people, they begin to sing; and their song is a prayer:

*Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
We stand to bless Thee ere our worship ceases,
And now, departing, wait Thy word of peace.*

The organ swings into lively postlude, and the congregation departs the house of God. They do not, as they said they would, "wait," God's "word of peace"; nor do they seem to consider that He gave His Word of peace *before* they asked for it.

The visiting minister once asked why the order of worship called for the song of prayer *after* the benediction. The answer: "Well, you see, that gives the minister a chance to get to the door to shake hands with the people."

I guess it does.

* * *

ALL of this makes for a mixed-up order of worship, and a utilitarian, not to say unreasonable, *conception* of worship.

May I recommend for this part of our worship service a better way?

The people stand at the close of worship, and are ready to go their several ways. But though they go from God's house, they would not desire to go from God. When they go from the place of communion, into the way that leads again to toil, conflict, trial, and temptation in the world, they fervently desire what is most needful — the grace and love and fellowship of the Triune God. And though they go from

each other as members, each to his own way, they desire that they should yet in the Spirit be one body in love and service.

The people, standing at the close of worship, lift their souls in prayer to God:

*May the grace of Christ our Savior,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favor,
Rest upon us from above;
Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord.
And possess, in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford. Amen.*

The Lord is never slow to answer His people. And while they are yet in prayerful waiting, the minister lifts his hands over their bowed heads, and says to them, in God's name:

The grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

* *

The people stand at the close of the worship. The Lord has indeed blessed them in all things, even as He greeted them with assurances of His grace at the beginning of the worship service.

When they go again, they are not willing to go unless God goes with them. There is too much before them, in all that life in our world brings, for them to face it without God. Like Jacob, they are saying to God, "I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me."

They plead with God when they sing:

*Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Thy love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace;
O refresh us, O refresh us,
Traveling through this wilderness.*

*Of Thy love some gracious token
Grant us, Lord, before we go;
Bless Thy Word which has been spoken,
Life and peace on all bestow;
O direct us, and protect us
In the paths we do not know.*

And the Lord hears, and He answers quickly. The gracious token of His love is given to them in the benediction, and they are dismissed with the blessing for which they asked when the minister says to them in God's name:
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

THE people stand at the close of worship.

The Lord's day comes to its end. It has been a day of rest, joy, peace. The peace was not the mere peace of quiet, of idleness, of a Sunday without toil or disturbance.

The peace was not a negative thing, characterized merely by the absence of something. The peace was a positive thing, an experience of God's nearness, of His loving fellowship, a peace of possession, a peace passing all understanding.

It is such a peace as one wishes, and as one may indeed have even away from God's house, and on days other than Sunday — a peace even in the face of losses, sorrows, disappointments, conflicts — the peace of God.

The people ask for it when they sing:
Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise

With one accord our parting hymn of praise;

We stand to bless Thee ere our worship cease,

And now, departing, wait Thy word of peace.

The Lord hears. He heard before they prayed. But now His answer is heard, when the minister says, in God's name:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

* * *

THERE are yet two things we ought to consider in this connection.

Consider, first, that when we sing songs as these at the conclusion of worship, we engage, while we sing, in the solemn exercise of prayer.

And this prayer, for a good so large, should be uttered with the same concentration, earnestness, reverence of spirit as should characterize all our prayers. The song is not an occasion for pulling on the children's boots, or for gathering up the coats. The song is a prayer. Pray as you would at any other time that you venture, in Jesus' name, to come before the throne of grace.

Consider, secondly, that if this be the last element of worship, there is still plenty of time for the minister to go to the doorway to meet and shake hands with the people. The people need only wait for him. It is well, in any event, for the people to stand in respectful and reverent silence within God's house before leaving God's house. Why should there be the rush to get out of the courts of Jehovah, for which the heart of the saint has so much yearned?

Wait a moment, in silent reverence! And while you are waiting, the minister can quietly and reverently move through the midst of his people, and be ready to meet them as they go.

Missions and the Creeds

By HARRY R. BOER

III The Canons of Dordt

IT will probably come as a surprise to many that of the three creeds to which the Reformed Churches subscribe the greatest missionary value is to be found in the Canons of Dordt. Theologically this is not so self-evident since the five doctrines of which the Canons treat — total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints — do not seem to have an immediately missionary significance. Yet these doctrines and the manner in which they are treated have a value for the missionary church, and especially for the missionary, which simply

cannot be overestimated. Of this more later.

Historically it is more evident that the Canons should take the missionary task more seriously than the other two creeds. They were written in 1618-19, fifty-six years after the Heidelberg Catechism was written. During these fifty-six years the balance of power in Europe had begun to shift markedly. The symbol of this shift is the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English in 1588. From then on Spain and Portugal went into eclipse as major powers and England and Holland rose to the ascendancy. By the time the synod of Dordt met, the lines of future

Missions and the Creeds — Continued

development with respect to control of the seas had become rather plain. As a result western Europe had begun to make contact with distant peoples, and this is reflected in the creed written by the theologians of Dordt. Precisely on the relation between peoples of different races the Canons have some things to say, and that in a missionary context, which speak loudly and significantly to our racially conscious and racially prejudiced age. Let us first look at these expressions.

No Doctrine of Racial Superiority

During the seventeenth century the idea of racial superiority was strongly held by most Europeans. Indians were pictured as barbarians without heads and with eyes in their chests. They were called "heathen," which word included not only the idea of standing outside the pale of Christianity but also that of cultural and often racial inferiority. In the sixteenth century a pope had found it necessary to declare that Indians do indeed have souls and are salvable. It could have been forgiven the fathers of Dordt if something of the prevailing spirit had crept into their theology. But the opposite is the case. Consider the following explicit statements:

1. Chapter I, Rejection of Errors, par. 9. The synod rejects the errors of those who teach "That the reason why God sends the gospel to one people rather than to another is not merely and solely the good pleasure of God, but rather the fact that one people is better and worthier than another to which the gospel is not communicated."

2. Chapter III & IV, Art. 7. "This mystery of His will God revealed to but a small number under the Old Testament; under the New Testament (the distinction between various peoples having been removed) He reveals it to many. The cause of this dispensation is not to be ascribed to the superior worth of one nation above another, nor to their better use of the light of nature, but results wholly from the sovereign good pleasure and unmerited love of God . . ."

It is interesting to read these statements in the light of past, and some

present, missionary thought. Take, for instance, the "philosophy of history" developed by Friedrich Fabri, director of the Rhenish mission (German) in 1859. He insisted that it is wrong to try to effect the Christianization of whole peoples, as in Europe, because this might have as a result that world leadership would be taken from the European peoples. This would be calamitous, for God has in His divine plan of history given the leadership of the world to the Japhethites to the very last day of world history*. It is one thing to see calamity in the eclipse of the West in the world scene, quite another to base a claim for inherent superiority of a civilization or a race on a single passage in the Bible, and still another to restrict the missionary proclamation in the interest of a racial theory so conceived. It is, of course, very convenient to support a racial *status quo* by a reference to Japheth and the Hamitic curse. But it is very questionable whether it is exegetically and theologically defensible to support a view with such profound ramifications on one controverted passage in the Bible. In any case, the Church is bound not by the individual views of theologians, commentators or other writers when these are not clearly vindicated by Scripture, but by the dogma of the Church. And the dogma enunciated at Dordrecht acknowledges no "superior worth of one nation above another."

Dordt's Missionary Vision

THERE are other and, for that period in history, rather remarkable statements about the universal spread of the Gospel in the Canons of Dordt.

1. Chapter I, Art. 3. "And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings to whom He will and at what time He pleases; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified."

2. Chapter II, Art. 5. "Moreover, the promise of the Gospel . . . to-

gether with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel."

3. Chapter II, Art. 8. "... it was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation and language, all those and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father . . ."

4. Chapter II, Art. 9. "This purpose, proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, has from the beginning of the world to this day been powerfully accomplished, notwithstanding all the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell; so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one. . ."

5. Chapters III & IV, Art. 15. "And as to others who have not yet been called, it is our duty to pray for them to God, who calls the things that are not as if they were. But we are in no wise to conduct ourselves towards them with haughtiness, as if we had made ourselves too differ."

Here we find many thrusts of an eminently missionary value: the universal significance of the Gospel, the need of preaching the Gospel to all men without distinction, God's Lordship over the missionary task, certainty that the universal Church will be gathered in, the need of prayer for the unconverted, the rejection, by plain implication, that the doctrine of election in any way absolves the Church from missionary proclamation. In Chapter V, Art. 4 we also find a significant reference to "converts," a distinctly missionary term.

All of this is obviously a tremendous advance over the Catechism and the Belgic Confession, the more so since these several expressions are not made with deliberate intent, but are scattered quite naturally through the body of the whole. Nevertheless, the same imbalance obtains here, albeit in lesser degree that we discovered in the Catechism. The divine activity stands sharply on the foreground in most of the passages and the human activity recedes into the background. Even the passage in II:5 is qualified by the clause, "to whom God out of His good

* J. C. Hoekendijk, *Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingswetenschap*, Utrecht, 1948, pp. 52-57. Dr. Hoekendijk shows that the notion of racial superiority has played a significant role in the whole development of German missionary thought.

pleasure sends the Gospel." The meaning seems to be that *when* God sends the gospel to a people *then* it must be published to them promiscuously and without distinction. The "ought" of the proclamation is conditioned by the divine sending. But the mandate of Scripture is that the Gospel must *everywhere* and *always* be published. No conditions are attached to the mandate (Matt. 28:18, 19, 20). *That* is the sending by which we are bound. The wording of the clause referred to involves the danger that the Church may try to inquire into the hidden counsel of God. (When William Carey proposed, about 1790, that the gospel be preached in heathen lands church leaders told him that God would take care of that if He wanted such proclamation.) It is not for us to try to determine where and where not God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel. Many missionaries have overcome the impossible, and thus met the objection of well-meaning friends that their undertaking was not God's way. Are not the fields everywhere white unto the harvest? Missions, like preaching in the churches and the Christian life of good works, is an intensely *human* activity and any view of the divine authorship of missions which neglects this truth wrongly represents what is involved in the divine concern for the gathering in of the Church.

Comfort for the Missionary

Quite apart from direct missionary reference, the Canons have a supreme practical value for the missionary. This practical value is *comfort* amid the untold spiritual weaknesses of the young Church, surrounded as it is on every side by heathenism and retaining so much of it in its own ranks. How much of magic, fetishism, fear of demons, pagan custom, still remain in the just born Christian. The fathers of Dordt correctly recognized this when they wrote, "converts are not always so influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God as not in some particular instances sinfully to deviate from the guidance of divine grace, so as to be seduced by and to comply with the lusts of the flesh," v. 4. How keen the disappointment of the missionary can be when, after long and faithful labor with a promising Christian, he discovers that the attractions of paganism are sometimes more than he can resist. Will the Christian Church and community stand against the overwhelming force of environment and tradition? Will converts choose for Christ in critical moments of temptation? Will the fruits of grace become more evident? With these experiences and questions the missionary struggles each day.

God has a word to speak here. It is the word of his faithfulness, the word of power, the word of promise, that he

will not forsake the work of his hands. This divine word of faithfulness, power, and promise the Canons so beautifully summarize. Here we read, with an emphasis not found in either of the other creeds, that the young life that has through the preaching been called into being is not of man but of God. It is "that regeneration so highly extolled in scripture, that renewal, new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive, which God works without our aid." This work is "most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable . . . so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe," III & IV:12. In this and numerous other places God tells the missionary what are the limits of his concern for the flock, and he is thereby pointed again to his first and last duty: Preach the Word; be instant, in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort. When this is done the missionary may commit both his work and his people to the God who keeps his word and know that

God will himself confirm them with his blessing,
And on the roll of nations he will count,
All those as born on Zion's mount,
In many tongues one God, one faith confessing.

Junior Colleges Reconsidered

By HENRY ZYLSTRA

Now that my piece on Junior Colleges of a couple of issues back has had the benefit of scrutiny and comment by a number of searching critics, I return to the argument.

One thing ought to be said at once about that comment of those friendly critics. All of them — Mrs. Winifred Brouwer in the *Journal* before last, Mr. Peter De Boer in the last preceding issue, the Reverend Mr. John Ehlers in *De Wochter* for December 16, 1952, Mr. John A. Vander Ark in the *Banner* for January 23, as well as the several correspondents whose letters were mainly nods of assent to the position that I took — all of them agree that the *educational issue* is the determinative one.

All of them feel quite as strongly as I do that the integrity of our Christian

higher education, both as education and as Christian education, must be developed and maintained. The question on which opinion differs is whether or not this can be done when we have Junior Colleges in our system.

THE gist of my case was that college education, if it is to be substantially Christian higher education, must aim at philosophy. Such an aim, I felt, could be realized only at an institution which has a university character, one, that is, in which a range, depth, and integration of studies is conducted by a community of scholars. Without this, I feared, we should be settling for something less than the thoroughgoing philosophical character of the higher

education of our young men and women.

Mrs. Brouwer fears, I think, that in taking this position I am spinning out an ideal somewhat in abstraction from "the needs of the various communities." She suggests that my word "aristocratic," which I used to characterize one aspect of higher education, was only too justly taken. Perhaps, too, she has misgivings about my word "philosophy" as being a kind of Brahmin or contemplative thing. "Learning is of no value," she says, "unless it performs a service."

All that is something to think about, of course, and to reckon with. Perhaps we differ. Perhaps I explained my idea too thinly. I want to try at least by illumination to persuade.

Junior Colleges Reconsidered — Continued

Concerning that aristocratic, that qualitatively exacting, element in higher education, especially when philosophy is conceived of as its end, I have this further to say. Philosophy, whether in teacher or student, implies command, grasp, penetration. That is what makes the assembling of a Faculty at a Christian college so difficult. There are persons who qualify because they are Christians. They qualify also because they have marked pedagogical ability. They qualify, further, because they have gone through the paces of a field of learning, have higher degrees and all that. One would think that such qualifications ought to suffice. But an important one, as I see it, is still missing. It is the thoroughly philosophical character of the mind, the continuous and vital interplay, so to speak, of the religion, and learning, and life. I consider this rare in comparison with those other qualifications; and yet, in a Christian university college, where the forming, reinforcing, and ripening of the Christian mind is the object, this qualification is the least dispensable. I consider that persons who have it are comparatively few, even among learned persons, and that those few are correspondingly invaluable.

It may be, further, that Mrs. Brouwer and I differ about "the needs of the various communities," and about "learning" which has no value "unless it performs a service." It is true that I personally shy away from making "needs" and "service" the norm in education. Or put it this way: I recommend philosophy (in the sense of that former article) for satisfying the needs and for performing the service. Truth is always practical, liberal education always has a utility, philosophy is always useful, though the test of none of them is whether it works. The way to service is through the truth, as the way to the love of the neighbor is the way through the love of God. College ought to be ideal, normative, philosophical. It can perhaps do its work best when it is least conscious of utility and application. I quoted Newman for clarity last time. I quote from him again:

I know well it (knowledge — z) may resolve itself into an art, and terminate in a mechanical process, and in tangible fruit; but it may also fall back upon that Reason which informs it, and resolve itself into phi-

losophy. In one case it is called Useful Knowledge, in the other Liberal . . . Let me not be thought to deny the necessity, or to decry the benefit, of such attention to what is particular and practical, as belongs to the useful or mechanical arts; life could not go on without them; we owe our daily welfare to them . . . I only say that Knowledge, in proportion as it tends more and more to be particular, ceases to be knowledge.

Mrs. Brouwer will appreciate, I am sure, that I am using her argument as an opportunity to shed light on the nature of our problems in higher education, and not merely to refute it. She was careful herself to point out that "This service does not necessarily have to be of a practical nature." The fact is, though, that if we use community "needs" and "service" as normative in education we are, as I think of it, leaving ourselves wide open to the invasion of practical as distinguished from philosophical training. And such a training would constitute a poor medium for realizing educationally what it means to be Christian.

One phrase, if you will permit me, Mrs. Brouwer, I should like to rescue from the reputation it gets in your question, "Why limit 'seats of learning' to Grand Rapids?" Mr. De Boer also in the lively style of his constructive letter hits on the "Tower of Babel" for designating Calvin College. Well, *place* has a little but not much to do with a qualitatively excellent university college. I cannot think that Oxford would quite be Oxford if it were transported to Brisbane, or that Harvard would be Harvard removed from the Charles. There is such a thing as a *genius loci* 'which haunts the home where it has been born.' A 'tradition,' highly educational as an influence, likes a local habitation. I cannot think much of a college constituted by some professors and students and textbooks invading a building. The best log for Mark Hopkins to sit on is Heidelberg.

So much for Grand Rapids. Any community which has ten million dollars to spare can very probably have our central institution in its town. Place does not mean so much as that. But 'seat of learning' is something else entirely. Newman was so careful to pour it full of content. It implies his-

tory. It means the center, the vital center. It implies decades, centuries, if possible, of the give and take of the community of scholars in working out what being Christian means for education. It implies depth of resources, in tradition, in men, in books, in scientific and artistic deposits. The university college of our church and our community ought to be, I suggest, such a solid center, capable of providing a thoroughly philosophical education.

Mr. De Boer's thoughtful proposals are deserving also of careful attention. There is solid contribution to our discussion in his piece, and I wish I had space to do it more justice.

It is good to know, for instance, and I gladly take Mr. De Boer's word for it, that the "educational vindication of a Junior College has always been a primary consideration by those leaders in Iowa and environs . . . who have sought a Junior College establishment." What would also be interesting to know is whether the people whom these leaders serve have a similarly realistic and high regard for the integrity of higher education. They have, beyond shadow of doubt, a heartfelt need for genuinely Christian education. But have they also a good sense of the difficulty of college work, and a thorough sense of what is demanded of an institution capable of achieving Christian education on the college level? Is their vision of higher education borne on the wings of an ideal which recognizes the necessity of a thoroughly philosophical training? Or are the leaders going to find their own ideals substantially compromised by local pressures for economy, convenience, control, universal admission of students, curricular adaptation to ability, and vocational slanting of courses? My idea, as you have surmised, Mr. De Boer, is that your people ought to come to recognize that what they must have, to really satisfy the need they feel for Christian College education, is a substantial, four-year, liberal arts and sciences course at a university college. It is, as I said, no kindness to them to let them settle for a stone, when what they want is bread.

In reference to my "unity in diversity of studies," Mr. De Boer wonders whether I mean to say that

(1) any school which does not have a unity in the diversity of studies does not qualify as a college and hence is educationally unsound, and he then goes on to ask:

Doesn't such an argument immedi-

ately label all technical schools, teachers' colleges, or any college, for that matter, which does not offer a liberal arts curriculum, as irrelevant to true higher education?

EXCEPT for the fact that the word "irrelevant" is very inclusive, and except for the fact that I should have welcomed the phrase "and sciences" after the liberal arts (it is a popular fallacy that the force of the "liberal" accrues only to the arts and not to the sciences), I can say in reply, Yes, precisely, that is my meaning. My position on this, and one pretty generally held among us, I think, is that an exclusive engineering school, or an exclusive nurses training school, or normal training school (one, that is, wholly given to the methods and techniques of pedagogy), cannot provide a philosophical education. Some attention to such practical arts in colleges aiming at liberal education by way of philosophy is to be justified only by the structure of courses in arts and sciences in which they have their setting. And what I think inevitable in community Junior Colleges is a comparatively large role in applicatory practical arts, and a comparatively small role of philosophical structure. This, were it so, would be to rule out the means for realizing Christian meaning in college education. Moreover — and this is a crucial consideration in vindicating Junior Colleges — that liberal or philosophical structure of the training should *precede* the application. If technical training is justified anywhere in colleges it is at the end, not at the beginning, of the process. The university character I keep insisting on bears most directly upon the "basic" college.

Consequently, when Mr. De Boer states further that "Such an argument seems to cry out against the present composition of the American university," I fear that I can only agree. There is much that we ought to learn from the composition of the American universities, but one thing which I consider we ought not to take over from them, or such of them as have it, is the organization of the curriculum on pragmatic bases, or on the basis of "scientific method." My plea for the vertical dimension in college education is a plea for the maintenance of a structure of courses philosophically determined. Otherwise we shall be considering Latin no better than Spanish for realizing Christian education.

Mr. De Boer is certainly right in holding that there is a good deal of scholarly potential in our community. But the *further development* he himself speaks of is a thing of tremendous importance. A writer is not a writer when he wants to be one, but when he has written. And a scholar is not a scholar when he has the potential. Yes, "the intellectual capacity . . . of our preachers and theologians" could make for excellent scholars, but there must also be the leisure, the opportunity, the resources, the challenge, the stimulus and correction of colleagues, and the like. We at Calvin — if I may speak thus generally this once — long for the time when it will be possible for us to be scholars. We hope our successors will be, and some of us almost manage to qualify already. My argument is that I cannot see a Junior College staff as a favorable body for such development.

On his next point, Mr. De Boer has me in an awkward position. I had indicated that much of the first two years of the Calvin College program of studies was unfortunately devoted to college preparatory work, to "fundamentals." Hence Mr. De Boer states: "Those who would argue the cause of Junior Colleges continue such a movement because they feel that the situation at Calvin will not experience any marked change." At first reading this sounds like the argument, "They do it; why can't we?" But Mr. De Boer is probing something more basic than that. What he is asking, really, is this: Can the situation, in which grammar schools, junior high schools, high schools, and the college are all involved, be changed? Or shall we have to come to terms with it as inevitable to universal or democratic education? And why not, then, set up Junior Colleges to do the college preparatory work which, in more selective and exacting days, was done by the high schools? If we choose to accommodate ourselves to this "situation," the fact is, as Mr. De Boer justly enough points out, that by setting up Junior Colleges, we should be liberating Calvin College for its properly university-college work.

This issue, which Mr. De Boer does well to expose so clearly, may turn out to be the crucial one in determining the educational *raison d'être* of Junior Colleges. I had the issue in the back of my mind, but I did not explore it further, when I said, "We cannot accommodate

ourselves to failure; we must quit failing."

It is an issue which deserves independent and fulsome treatment. For the moment I let it go by saying again that we must correct the situation and not perpetuate it. To set up Junior Colleges for college preparatory work — elementary mathematics, elementary foreign languages, the rudiments of writing and speaking, survey courses in world history, textbook work in general science, and the like — would be to capitulate to disaster. This would be the more true, when such courses were conducted by teachers continually preoccupied with them, than when, as now, they are conducted by teachers working with advanced courses and better able therefore to rescue the work from cursoriness and superficiality. The result would be that the Senior College would become the Basic College, and the Junior College would become the High School. Such procedure would simply be to lose two years of the desperately necessary four which must go to the thoroughly philosophical higher education of the student.

It is true that in his interesting positive suggestions, Mr. De Boer sees some hope in cutting down the present high school years to two, by means of greater efficiency all down the line, and thus of salvaging some basic college work for his four-year community college. The suggestion has some point. But I cannot see what bulwark there would be in the proposed arrangement that would be proof against the multitude of levelling forces now operating against the integrity of our higher education. I should say, indeed, that the shift of the problem from the seat of learning to the regional community would accelerate the *levelling*.

THERE is very little in American educational practice that can give us the cue to solution of this difficulty. The rising "community colleges" seem destined to sacrifice a thoroughly philosophical education to something which is forced to substitute for it but cannot. Where philosophy as the object of training means so much as in Christian higher education it must mean, this cannot be a welcome solution.

I find it interesting, of course, to note that three of my friendly critics — Mrs. Brouwer, Mr. De Boer and the Reverend Mr. Ehlers — tend to vindicate Junior Colleges partly on the ground

Junior Colleges Reconsidered — Continued

that they will become colleges. I hardly know, therefore, whether what I ought to do now is to continue the argument against the *desirability* of Junior Colleges, or to start one against the *possibility* of colleges. The Reverend Mr. Ehlers, in his delightfully futuristic mood, sees no fewer than eight of them in his mind's eye — in Ripon, Edmonton, Hamilton, Paterson, Grand Rapids, Pella, Hull, and Edgerton, and while he is about it he adds a university in Chicago. It is a pity that I have space here (Mr. Ehlers gave such generous space to a full statement of my argument that he had no room left to criticize it) for only three comments. The one is that there can be no objection to full-fledged regional colleges if each of them is as good as Calvin College will be when it is as good as it ought to be. The other is that one thing which is worse than a Junior College is a poor college. And the third is that when we get our university — and I for one am grateful to Mr. Ehlers for keeping this subject always in our educational consciousness — we ought not to waste it in isolation, but benefit from it by keeping a college always in integral interdependence with it.

Maybe we can take our cue from

Europe, from The Netherlands, say. There they have a MULO (More Advanced Elementary Education), a three-year institution roughly equivalent in accomplishment to our high schools. They have also an HBS (Secondary School), a five-year institution which in its last two years moves towards vocational orientation. This is the *terminal* school for very many Gereformeerde young men and women. And they have, further, a Gymnasium, which is in effect selective, and trains for the University. I see some possibility of coming to grips with "universal" education in a way which will not sacrifice the nature of education in such an arrangement. And I think they could be introduced into our high school structures, perhaps by the addition of a year or two, but necessarily accompanied by distinctions in kind. The MULO, HBS, and Gymnasium would have to be running alongside each other in one and the same institution. That would give some philosophical training to all; and it would be terminal for many. And I should then wish that all graduates of all the Gymnasiums would go to the University at Calvin for their college education. I think it would be decades before we reached a numerical satura-

tion point. And anything less than our best would be unfair to our young men and women.

If the proposals for establishing Junior Colleges were, as now seems to be the case, the occasion for rethinking our total educational problem as a Reformed community, those proposals would already have accomplished a great good. In this rethinking, to which the *Journal* for one invites general participation, we shall have to insure three things to the best of our ability: The first is that everyone who wants it should have opportunity to get as much Christian education as he is capable of. The second is that we may not horizontalize and attenuate the education to the point at which it ceases to be education. And the third is that because of our concern for the vertical dimension, for the Christian mind, we must do full justice to the philosophical aspect of our schools.

I glance at my notes and see that there is much more to say. That must wait until another time. I am very grateful to all of my friendly critics for their pertinent contributions. I hope I have not abused them by using their argument too cavalierly in my haste. These columns are open to their further reflections.

NETHERLANDS FLOOD RELIEF

It has been suggested by men from our own churches studying in the Netherlands that we can best help by sending gifts of money to the Central Bureau of the Deaconates of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. See their "Letter from the Netherlands regarding the flood" in *The Banner* of February 13, 1953, p. 211.

Note also the announcement on p. 218 of the same issue of *The Banner*, placed by the Synodical Committee, asking that contributions for the Netherlands Flood Relief be sent to:

MR. J. J. BUITEN,
Christian Reformed Publishing House,
47 Jefferson Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Funds received by Mr. Buiten will be sent to the proper agencies in the Netherlands for most effective distribution.

The Voice of the Waters

Holland has by now disappeared from your headlines, perhaps its tragedy from your minds. But Zeeland's fields are still the ocean's bed. Not one wave has turned backward to the sea. Not one house has been rebuilt. Not one church has been restored. The many dead are but freshly buried. Let us not too soon forget.

A village called Stavenisse on the island of Tholen in the midst of the islands of Zeeland is now the bottom of the sea. That is really the entire story. Lead in it the horrors of many lifetimes, and you have the few seconds of turbulent death in the morning when Stavenisse went under the waters. It rained four in that howling morning when the winds carried the alarm of the church bell into every village home. On such a night there could be but one alarm. The mad gales carried the overtones of disaster. The men went from their beds to learn how bad and how soon it would come. Go home, they were told, take your wives and children and cattle, take them to the high places, take your shovels and hurry to the dikes. They got to their houses. But the sea would not hold back. Like an express train in speed it came. As a solid cliff, twenty feet high, it came. A ravaging torrent, it came, to tear the village in pieces, to drown her precious children, to spoil her hard labored fields, and to drive its waves of death on to the sleeping farms of Tholen farther down.

The sea was no respecter of men or towns on this early morning of the first day of Holland's dark February. We can list the towns. We can number the dead. We can count the broken dikes, the flooded acres, the homeless families. We can reckon the costs. But pain and sorrow are not to be totaled to a sum greater than its parts. All of Holland together felt no more grief on Sunday morning than a single mother whose child was torn from her arms and swallowed by the sea, no more terror than one lad clinging alone to a floating rooftop with the shriek of drowning men and the bellow of dying cattle in his ears, no more loss than the man watching his hard won lands gulped under the salty waters and his house swept away by the black swells. Yet, Stavenisse was only one village, and there were many, many more. The men and women and children who suffer are ten thousands. Their wounds are one

wound in the heart of this nation. It hurt hard, and it will not soon heal.

But it is not my purpose to inform. The news services have described for all the world what has happened here. Surely the world has read and wept.

A man will not learn to take himself seriously, said Kierkegaard, until he finds himself in hell. Last week the people of the Netherlands, learned to take themselves seriously. In pain a man becomes aware of himself. So does a people. What did Holland discover? The waters spoke with a voice mightier than many tongues. They were heard in every city and every village in the land. What did this people learn from them besides new pain, new tragedy, new sorrow, and new loss?

Holland learned her weakness. We had confessed, it was said, that God had made the world. But we believed that we had made the Netherlands. Our dikes were our pride and our boast. Our polders were ours and we made them. But on Sunday and as it gradually heard the worst, Holland learned anew that men does not build alone nor does he build as God builds. She learned too, that no man withstands when God destroys. The land won from nature in years could be reclaimed by her in moments. The message of the waters was clear: We are all in God's hands. Those who were plucked as a straw from the waters learned this. All we who lived on dry ground learned, too, that we lived that day through God's goodness. How well they and we learned, no one can say.

Holland learned her strength. Though weak against the flood, the people rose strong in moral character. From every hamlet, from every home, a sympathetic arm was stretched. No man rested. Every man gave himself in some way to the need of the awful hour. One driving force took hold of all: save and restore. Men hastened to the work of rescue and relief — from all the land they came. Clothing was brought from every closet, money from every purse. Raw distress called forth warm response. Holland had forgotten its strength, and was a little surprised to learn it anew.

To those of us living as guests in the land it was an unforgettable inspiration. This was Holland at her moral best, and her best was great.

Holland learned her unity. Few nations were more divided than this small land. Her political divisions are deep because they are bedded in principle. Her religious cleavages go to the roots of its whole society. Her social levels sunder class from class. But last week Holland learned that she was a people. That she was one people. That hers was a common humanity. It was her human bellows in her human community on whom the floods came. It was her human fellows who suffered and lost and died. A single hand was stretched to help. Not many hands, but one. The hand of a single, a united people. As one she worked, and as one she works still and shall work. As one she gave, and as one she gives and shall give. Even as one she suffers and suffers still. How long this shall endure, we do not care to guess; we who are here only know that this Holland shall rise again.

Holland learned her friends. She learned that they were legion. They lived in Paris and Palestine, in London and Lisbon, in Madrid and Melbourne, in Berlin and Boston, in every place where people heard of her plight. Friendship brought help in the distress, and it came from everywhere. A flood of sympathy came over the land as the waters had come before it. The people learned that they were not alone. And it was sweet to the taste. Men spoke of it with choked throats and tremorous voices. Holland shall not forget.

But we, Reformed Holland Americans are more than friends. We are of these who suffer. We are of these who must build again. We are indebted to them too, as a branch is indebted to the tree. The cost is too great to be conceived. The dikes must be closed. They must be built again, better than before. The sea must be pushed back to the sea. The houses must rise again. The farms made fertile. The churches . . . Yes, the churches! Here too everything must begin again. Here too the cost is overwhelmingly great. Here it is where we should bend our backs. Here above all we should give much. For here our debt is greater. Here our bonds are closest. Here our sympathies are deepest. This is our task, then. Surely no man of us shall hold back.

Lewis B. Smedes, Amsterdam

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

Dear sirs:

In reading the article, "Women Too May Vote" by Mr. George Stob, I was surprised to read that the church law permitting only men to vote in congregational meetings was called "tradition" as if that law did not find its roots in the Word of God, both in Old and New Testament.

In the state as God created man in its fullness, man and wife were to have rule over the earth. But when man fell, God gave man rule over the woman (Genesis 3:16). And the New Testament gives ample proof that God ordained man to rule over the wife, the home, the Church and the State. Witness the following texts: I Timothy 2:8-15; I Timothy 4; I Timothy 2:12; I Corinthians 14:34-35; Titus 2, 3 & 5.

And then, by all means, take a look at Isaiah 3:12, where the prophet calls attention to the degradation when children and women ruled over Israel.

And does not recent secular history prove that if man thinks himself wiser than God, the result will be calamity. Just look at the broken homes, the delinquent children, the youthful criminals that the penitentiaries and jails are full of.

Now we know that all these calamitous conditions cannot be blamed on woman suffrage, but it is a contributing factor. Now is woman more sinful than man? No, not at all! But man in its entirety is sinful and man as *man* has contributed largely to the predicament wherein we find ourselves. For man has not loved his wife as he was commanded by God. In many instances he has not provided for his family as was laid upon him. And what has become of the love and discipline of the home which was meant by God to discipline the world?

Now it does not need to be a mystery to God's children that He, namely God, uses also these things to bring about His counsel and uses them for the good of those that love Him and the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Now, therefore, this tradition is rooted and grounded in God's Word. Would it not be the way of wisdom for the Christian Reformed Church to guard against changes that set aside the sure teachings of God's Word for the will of man because the majority is following that way?

Let us beware that we do not bow to the pressure from within and without, even if that pressure comes from the Mother Church in the Netherlands.

Let us fight the wrong from whatever direction it may come to us.

December 30, 1952

Louis Hofing,

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Editor Friends:

Among the many spiritual and intellectual stimulants served up monthly in your worthwhile publication have been the articles by Rev. Harry Boer on various aspects of Missions. It is with reference to the January 1953 article, "Missions and the Creeds: II. The Heidelberg Catechism," that I make a few comments.

First of all, Boer's article deserves appreciation because it points up one of the aspects of Scripture truth which are not particularly emphasized in the Heidelberg Catechism. Although some may not agree that actual amendment should take place, the validity of Boer's homiletical suggestions are beyond question.

Secondly, Boer's suggestions deserve repeated affirmation among us. That the mission duty of the church is implicit in the Catechism is not always exhibited among us Reformed preachers. May I make this concrete? Boer refers to Lord's Day XXXI, and in passing states that the doctrine of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven particularly" lends itself to missionary reference.

How true this is! Only recently my

eyes were opened to the tremendous missionary significance of Jesus' words to Peter and all of the apostles. So often we have emphasized the "locking out," excluding, excommunicating power of these keys, traditionally preaching on L. D. XXXI with greater attention to questions 83 and 85 than to question 84. Remembering that the "keys" include Gospel preaching as well as church discipline, should we not let the force of Jesus' words fall as equally upon the "opening power" of the Gospel? We all admit this, and yet frequently forget it when preaching on the "keys." John 20:22, 23, by the way, with its prior mention of remission, reminds us of the needed balance. J. H. Bavink in his Calvin Seminary lectures, "The Impact of Christianity on the Non-Christian World" (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948, page 16), points this up clearly: "When the Church permits the keys of the Kingdom of heaven to lie unused and rust, then through her neglect alone she excludes whole peoples from the Kingdom." Especially in the missionary task, emphasis upon "opening" must come first! John 3:11; Matthew 11:28-30.

Finally, may I venture to make one addition? It is true, as Boer points out, that "Credo" (LD XXI) and "Oratio" (LD XLVIII) appear in the Catechism now. Although the *work* of missions is barely mentioned, is it not too strong to say, "But nowhere do we read about the Church's 'Laboro'?" In Lord's Day XXXII, Q. 86, a hint of it is contained in the phrase, "... and that by our godly walk our neighbors also may be won to Christ," (Matthew 5:16).

Sincerely yours,

Dick L. Van Halsema

LAST CHANCE

The Reformed Journal Reading Club \$3.00 combination book offer for this year expires on March 31. See details in the January issue, and place any additional book-and-subscription orders before the closing date.

THE REFORMED JOURNAL READING CLUB